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1966/12/14

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Gov. Harriman

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE

December 14, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: S/AH - Chester L. Cooper CLC

Chalmers Roberts came in today. He was primarily interested in the reported bombing of targets within the city of Hanoi. "Was this a change in policy?" I told him that I was at a disadvantage because I knew nothing more than what I had read in the paper this morning. I wasn't sure that the reported bombing was true; I wasn't sure that if it was true, whether it was intentional or in error; and, in any case, I was not aware of any major shift in policy. I suggested that he address his question to someone able to comment more authoritatively on the subject. Roberts then asked whether, if the bombing had taken place, it would make the search for a negotiated settlement more difficult. I told him that attempts to end the fighting in Vietnam were made in the context of bombing the North and that a good case could be made that the bombing program would expedite rather than delay a negotiated settlement. He made an effort to search out the hard and soft liners on bombing, asking particularly about the views of Secretary McNamara, Secretary Rusk and Governor Harriman. I reminded him that the President himself made the final judgment and that this was based on both political and military considerations. I refused to be drawn into any further discussion on this point.

Roberts asked whether I thought the "six months clause" in the Geneva Communique served a useful purpose. I told him I thought it would lend credibility and specificity to our statements on withdrawal. I also pointed out that many of the people to whom we talked on our post-Manila trip felt that it was a useful addition.

Roberts

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Roberts asked about the movement of supplies from Soviet Union and China to North Vietnam and I told him in general terms that as far as we knew very little of the military supplies from the Soviet Union were coming in by sea and that the Chinese were supplying the small arms, clothing, certain amount of food and some consumer goods to the North Vietnamese.

Roberts asked me whether I thought the President was going to make a trip to Europe this spring and I told him that I would surely be the last to know.

S/AH-CLCooper:fjmcc